The implementation of the new curriculum in Cameroon: a focus on the development of competences in pupils

Noah ABUNGHANG ASUANTEH and
NGEMETAH Mirabel HAZAH
NFONAP HIGHER INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL STUDIES (NHIEPS) YAOUNDE IN AFFILIATION WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF BAMENDA, SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
abunghang@yahoo.co.uk

Abstract

His study focused on the profile of primary school pupils in Cameroon, as described in the 2018 curriculum for nursery and primary schools in Cameroon. To conduct the study, we formulated the hypothesis that the implementation of the new curriculum significantly influences the development of competences among pupils. To address the research question, we conducted a survey using questionnaires and observation. Questionnaires were administered to 76 teachers, and the data collected were analysed using SPSS version 25. The hypothesis was tested using simple linear regression. The results confirmed the hypothesis, indicating a significant relationship between the implementation of the new curriculum and the development of competences among pupils. Based on these findings, we recommend that teachers receive close supervision, coaching and guidance in the field from the relevant educational authorities.

Key words: *implementation, curriculum, competence, methods, development*

Résumé

Cette étude porte sur le profil des élèves de l'enseignement primaire au Cameroun, tel qu'il est décrit dans le curriculum de 2018 pour les écoles maternelles et primaires du Cameroun. Pour mener cette étude, nous avons formulé l'hypothèse selon laquelle la mise en œuvre du nouveau curriculum influence significativement le développement des compétences chez les élèves. Afin de répondre à la question de recherche, nous avons réalisé une enquête à l'aide de questionnaires et de l'observation. Les questionnaires ont été administrés à 76 enseignants, et les données recueillies ont été analysées à l'aide du logiciel SPSS version 25. L'hypothèse a été testée au moyen d'une régression linéaire simple. Les résultats ont confirmé l'hypothèse, indiquant l'existence d'une relation significative entre la mise en œuvre du nouveau curriculum et le développement des compétences chez les élèves. Sur la base de ces résultats, nous recommandons que les enseignants bénéficient d'un encadrement, d'un

accompagnement et d'un suivi réguliers sur le terrain de la part des autorités éducatives compétentes.

Mots-clés : *mise en œuvre, curriculum, compétence, méthodes, développement.*

1. Introduction

The advent of formal education in Cameroon is closely linked to the country's contacts with Europeans and North Americans through trade, evangelisation and colonisation. By the first half of the nineteenth century, precisely in January 1844, modern formal education had begun in Cameroon. It was introduced by Baptist missionaries from London under the sponsorship of the Baptist Missionary Society, with the first primary school being opened in Limbe (Tazifor, 2003). Since then, the education system in Cameroon and its curriculum have developed into a complex network managed by churches, the government and private individuals. With the expansion and transformation of the education sector, educators have increasingly reflected on the need for a more integrated professional identity through the reconceptualisation of the relationship between teaching and learning (Tambo, 2003).

In 1995, the largest educational forum since independence was held, bringing together Cameroon's educational authorities and partners from various sectors of society to discuss educational issues in the country (Tambo, 2003). Since then, there have been frequent changes aimed at adapting the education system to the level of development projected by the 1995 forum (MINEDUC, 1994; MINEDUC, 1995, cited in Tambo, 2003). In 1998, Law No. 98/004 of April 1998 was promulgated to establish guidelines for education in Cameroon (Chin et al., 2012). Shu (2000), cited in Tambo (2003), argues that Section 37(1) of the 1998 law states that "the teacher shall be the principal guarantor of the quality of education". This highlights the importance of paying particular attention to the implementation of the curriculum.

In 2018, the Ministry of Basic Education introduced a new curriculum for nursery and primary schools with a clearly defined learner profile. According to MINEDUB (2018), the Ministry of Basic

Education aims to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes of learners under its responsibility. By the end of the primary school cycle, learners are expected to have acquired national core skills that will enable them to participate effectively in further learning and other activities. This profile consists of seven National Core Skills that learners are expected to acquire by the end of the primary education cycle. These include: communication in the two official languages (English and French) and the use of at least one national language; the application of basic concepts in Mathematics, Science and Technology; the practice of social and citizenship values, including morality, good governance and budgetary transparency; the demonstration of autonomy, initiative, creativity and entrepreneurship; the use of basic Information and Communication Technology (ICT) concepts and tools; the practice of lifelong learning; and participation in physical, sporting and artistic activities.

The motivation for this study stems from the fact that MINEDUB (2018) states that the primary school curriculum is designed to guide the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes among learners and to lay the foundation for further learning, with particular emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). The curriculum therefore aims to develop competences that will enable learners to solve everyday problems in society, both during and after primary education. However, from 2018 to 2025, there appears to be limited evidence that pupils have acquired these expected competences. For instance, some pupils who complete Class Six may be unable to sing a song using sol-fa notation, produce an artwork, develop a project independently, use ICT tools effectively, establish and manage a small garden or farm, or carry out basic construction activities, despite the fact that the subject content includes the required knowledge and skills.

This situation has led to a reflection on how teachers implement the curriculum. The European Commission (2009) and Jeanne (2014) argue that the development of competence-based teaching requires teachers to possess subject knowledge, pedagogical experience and practical skills. Rop (2013), in a study on the implementation of the integrated English curriculum in Kenya, found that inadequate teacher preparedness hindered effective

curriculum implementation and affected curriculum outcomes. The study further indicated that unprepared teachers, the learning environment, follow-up mechanisms and even the pupils themselves may constitute obstacles to the successful implementation of a curriculum.

Bassirou and Asuanteh (2022) conducted a study on curriculum change and effective learning in primary schools in the English-speaking primary schools of Diamaré Division. Their study concluded that the definition of subject content in the primary school curriculum affects effective learning. They further found that, for effective learning to take place, learners need to be actively involved, teachers should promote reflective thinking, conduct criterion-based assessment and evaluate learners practically. They recommended that pedagogic inspectors should regularly organise pedagogical seminars and provide continuous pedagogical counselling.

Although these studies provide useful insights into teacher preparedness and curriculum change, they do not place sufficient emphasis on the implementation of the curriculum as a means of developing competences among pupils. This constitutes the gap that the present study seeks to address. The study therefore seeks to answer the following question: Does the implementation of the new curriculum significantly influence the development of competences among pupils?

To guide the study, a research objective and a research hypothesis are formulated. These are followed by the significance of the study, a review of the literature, the theoretical framework, the methodology and the analysis of the results. The study then presents some of the challenges encountered in the implementation of the curriculum and concludes with recommendations. **HYPO**

2. General hypothesis

The implementation of the new curriculum has a significant influence on the development of competences among pupils.

3. Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study is to assess how the implementation of the new curriculum for primary schools in Cameroon influences the development of competences among pupils. This is particularly important at this stage of the implementation of the curriculum adopted in 2018.

4. Significance of the study

This study is significant because it will provide evidence that can guide improvements in curriculum implementation and educational practice.

For the Ministry of Basic Education, the study will provide evidence on the effectiveness of curriculum implementation and identify areas that require policy review, curriculum improvement and increased support for schools.

For teachers, the study will identify the challenges they encounter in implementing the curriculum and provide recommendations for improving classroom practices, instructional strategies and competence assessment.

Finally, school administrators and pedagogic supervisors will gain insights into the factors affecting curriculum implementation. This will enable them to strengthen instructional supervision, provide better support to teachers and improve the provision of teaching and learning resources.

5. Literature review

5.1 The Notion of Competence in the Primary School Curriculum

The concept of "competence" has been widely debated and continues to have different meanings depending on the author and the discipline in which it is used. However, research in recent years has identified some key elements of the concept from both objectivist and constructivist perspectives. In their review of international literature, Kiffe and Tchibozo (2013) point out that

competence is, first and foremost, situational. It refers to one or more situations in which an individual is able to mobilise a set of appropriate resources in a relevant manner to deal successfully with problem situations. Competences should therefore be assessed using clearly defined criteria to determine whether a performance has been successful. Since competence itself cannot be directly observed, it must be assessed through measurable behaviours or performances.

According to the preamble of MINEDUB (2018), the new curriculum for primary schools in Cameroon is designed to guide the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes among learners and to lay the foundation for further learning, with particular emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). The primary school curriculum recognises that learners have unique personalities, talents, attitudes and interests that they bring to the classroom. Learners also have different experiences on which teachers can build to improve the teaching and learning process. An examination of MINEDUB (2018) shows that the curriculum includes a clearly defined learner profile consisting of the competences that learners are expected to acquire before completing primary education.

According to Roegiers (2001), an education system that focuses on the development of competences is a prerequisite for implementing a pedagogy of integration. This approach aims to enable learners to master situations that they may encounter in their professional and private lives. In this context, the pedagogy of integration has four main objectives: process, relevance, application and association.

Two major schools of thought can be identified in the field of the pedagogy of integration, distinguished mainly by the emphasis they place on vertical and horizontal transfer of learning. First proposed and developed by Gagné (1962), vertical transfer suggests that learners can acquire higher-order skills only after mastering the component skills required for them. In contrast, horizontal transfer proposes that learners develop the ability to transfer knowledge and skills by solving several complex situations of a similar level when these situations are presented in different contexts.

The approach widely used in Cameroon appears to be based on a pedagogical perspective that places the development of competences on teaching learners to learn through a variety of continuous and active methods. In this approach, transfer is achieved in a global manner and requires relatively little structuring (Fourez, 1999). The emphasis is placed on the learning process and on the application of knowledge and skills, including searching for information, analysing information and explaining information.

5.2 Teaching Methodology

Teaching methods play an important role in the implementation of the curriculum. Tambo (2003) defines teaching methods as standard procedures for presenting subject matter and organising teacher–learner interaction during a lesson. MINEDUB (2018) identifies three pedagogical methods in the new curriculum that are intended to facilitate the development of competences among pupils. These are Project-Based Learning (PBL), Cooperative Learning (CL) and the Flipped Classroom.

Firstly, Project-Based Learning (PBL) enables learners to construct knowledge and develop understanding through activities based on intellectual enquiry and a high level of engagement with meaningful tasks. The implementation of a pedagogical project requires learners to set objectives and work with their peers over a specific period, under the guidance of the teacher, to produce a concrete outcome. A project connects school-based activities with the learners' everyday world and therefore integrates intellectual, methodological, personal, interpersonal and communication competences.

Effective use of Project-Based Learning can address many learning challenges and make learning more focused on problem-solving. In practical terms, learners are expected to identify a problem, propose a project to address it, identify the different components of the project and brainstorm possible solutions with their classmates. The teacher guides the learners throughout the process, assigns roles to individual learners, monitors their progress and discusses the development of the project with individual learners, groups and the whole class. If this approach is

effectively implemented in the classroom, learners should be able to develop the competences defined in the curriculum.

The second method is Cooperative Learning (CL). This is a form of collaborative learning in which the teaching approach aims to develop learners' cognitive abilities, social and interpersonal skills, and sense of responsibility. In Cooperative Learning, pupils work together in small groups on a structured task. They are responsible not only for their own learning but also for contributing to the learning of the group. The method involves placing pupils in small, mixed-ability groups to work on a common task. In this way, pupils not only learn the content being taught but also support their peers in understanding it.

An important feature of Cooperative Learning is that learning becomes a shared process in which learners do not succeed individually but as members of a team. Learners understand that the contribution of each member can affect the success of the entire group. Through working in teams, pupils can enjoy the learning process while making use of their social skills. Cooperative Learning can help develop social leadership, communication, decision-making, problem-solving and conflict-resolution skills.

The third method is the Flipped Classroom. This is a pedagogical strategy in which the teacher asks learners, several days before a lesson, to carry out investigations into a particular aspect of a topic and present their findings during the following lesson. In this approach, learners take a more active role in presenting and constructing knowledge, while the teacher acts primarily as a facilitator and guide. After the presentations, the teacher guides the learners in organising, discussing and consolidating the knowledge they have gained through their research. Through this process, learners are encouraged to develop research, critical-thinking and problem-solving skills.

5.3 Curriculum Package or Content

The new curriculum is learner-centred and focuses on developing the skills and competences needed to address the challenges of contemporary Cameroon and the wider world. The curriculum covers ten subjects, namely: English Language and Literature,

Mathematics, Science and Technology, French, Social Studies, Vocational Studies, Arts, Physical Education and Sports, National Languages and Cultures, and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Each subject contains detailed content, expected learning outcomes, suggested teaching methods and recommended teaching and learning materials.

In addition to the subjects and their content, the curriculum outlines seven National Core Skills that learners are expected to acquire by the end of the nursery and primary education cycles. According to MINEDUB (2018), these seven National Core Skills include: Communication in the two official languages (English and French) and the use of at least one national language, use of basic notions in mathematics, science and technology, practice of social and citizenship values (morality, good governance and budgetary transparency), demonstration of the spirit of autonomy, a sense of initiative, creativity, and entrepreneurship, use of basic information and communication technology concepts and tools, practice of lifelong learning and practice of physical sports and artistic activities.

These core skills are intended to provide learners with the knowledge, abilities and attitudes required to function effectively in their communities and to continue learning throughout their lives.

5.4 Competence Development

In order to make learning relevant and enable learners to develop the expected competences more effectively, MINEDUB (2018) places the teaching content within Integrated Learning Themes. These themes provide the foundation around which teaching and learning activities for a specific period of the school year are organised. An integrated approach brings different subjects together and provides learners with opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills through varied and interconnected content. As a result, learners can develop a deeper understanding of concepts within their local contexts.

The curriculum also defines broad-based competences that learners are expected to develop. These can be grouped into four main categories. Firstly, intellectual competences refering to the

ability to use information effectively, solve problems, develop logical thinking and observation skills, exercise critical judgement, and engage in creative and innovative thinking. Secondly, methodological competences involving the ability to develop effective working methods, use Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), organise learning and develop a willingness and desire to learn across different subjects. Thirdly, personal and interpersonal competences which involve developing one's personality, acquiring the abilities required for socio-cultural integration and personal fulfilment, and working cooperatively with others. Finally, communication competences refering to the ability to communicate appropriately in the two official languages, English and French, and to communicate in at least one national language.

The development of these broad-based competences is central to the learner-centred approach of the new curriculum. They are intended to equip learners not only with subject-specific knowledge but also with the intellectual, methodological, personal, interpersonal and communication skills needed to apply their learning effectively in everyday life.

6. Theoretical framework

This study is guided by Kurt Lewin's Change Theory (1947), which is centred on a three-stage process: unfreezing, changing (or movement), and refreezing. The theory provides a framework for understanding how individuals and organisations respond to and manage change. It also identifies three forces that can influence the process of change: driving forces, restraining forces and equilibrium.

The first are driving forces. These are forces that push in a direction that promotes change. They facilitate change by encouraging individuals or groups to move towards a desired state and can shift the existing equilibrium in favour of change. The second are restraining forces. These are forces that oppose the driving forces and hinder change by pushing individuals or groups in the opposite direction. They can therefore shift the equilibrium against change. The third is equilibrium. This refers to a state in which the driving forces and restraining forces are balanced, resulting in little or no

change. According to Lewin, the existing equilibrium can be raised or lowered depending on changes in the relationship between the driving and restraining forces.

Lewin's theory further explains that organisational change takes place in three main stages. The first stage is unfreezing. This involves creating the conditions necessary for individuals to let go of existing patterns, practices or behaviours that may no longer be effective. This stage is important because it helps to overcome individual resistance and group conformity. According to Lewin, unfreezing can be achieved in three ways. First, the driving forces that encourage movement away from the existing situation can be increased. Second, the restraining forces that prevent movement away from the existing equilibrium can be reduced. Third, a combination of these two approaches can be used. Applied to curriculum reform in Cameroon, this suggests that before introducing a new curriculum, education policymakers should prepare the key stakeholders, particularly teachers, for the proposed changes. Teachers need to understand the reasons for the change, recognise its importance and develop a willingness to adopt new approaches. Effective preparation and involvement of teachers in the reform process could increase their commitment to implementing the new curriculum.

The second stage is changing or movement. This involves a process through which individuals or groups develop new thoughts, feelings, behaviours or practices that are more productive and appropriate than those associated with the previous situation. At this stage, the proposed change is accepted both in theory and in practice, together with the new requirements associated with it. In the context of this study, this stage involves teachers moving from traditional teaching approaches towards the learner-centred and competence-based approaches promoted by the 2018 primary school curriculum. Teachers are expected to adopt methods such as Project-Based Learning, Cooperative Learning and the Flipped Classroom, as well as other approaches that encourage active participation and the development of competences among learners.

The third and final stage is refreezing. This involves establishing the new practices as normal and sustainable ways of working so

that they become part of the standard practice of the organisation. Without this stage, individuals may easily return to their previous practices. In relation to the implementation of the new curriculum, the challenges observed may suggest that the three stages of change have not been adequately addressed. It appears that the implementation process may have moved towards the adoption of the new curriculum without sufficient preparation and transition from previous teaching practices. As a result, some teachers may continue to rely on traditional teaching approaches rather than fully adopting the learner-centred and competence-based methods required by the new curriculum.

This situation may help explain some of the challenges associated with the implementation of the 2018 curriculum and the limited evidence of the development of the competences expected among pupils. From the perspective of Lewin's Change Theory, sustainable curriculum reform requires not only the introduction of a new curriculum but also adequate preparation, support and follow-up to ensure that the new teaching practices become established and sustained.

Therefore, Lewin's Change Theory provides an appropriate framework for examining the implementation of the new primary school curriculum in Cameroon. It helps to explain how factors that promote or hinder change may influence teachers' adoption of the new curriculum and, consequently, the development of competences among pupils.

7. Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative research design to investigate the implementation of the new curriculum in Cameroon and its contribution to the development of competences in pupils. The quantitative approach was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to collect, quantify and statistically analyse data on the extent to which teachers implement the principles and practices of the new competency-based curriculum and how such implementation relates to pupils' competence development.

The population of the study comprised teachers in Government and Private Bilingual Primary Schools in the Diamaré Division of the Far

North Region of Cameroon. From this target population, a sample of 76 teachers was selected to participate in the study. The respondents were selected using the simple random sampling technique, which gave eligible teachers an equal opportunity of being included in the sample.

Data were collected using two main instruments: a structured questionnaire and a classroom observation checklist. The questionnaire was administered to the sampled teachers to obtain quantitative information concerning the implementation of the new curriculum, including teaching approaches, learning activities, assessment practices and other competency-based pedagogical practices. The classroom observation checklist was used to obtain complementary information on the extent to which curriculum implementation practices were actually reflected in classroom teaching and learning. The use of these two instruments helped to provide more comprehensive data and allowed the researcher to compare teachers' reported practices with observed classroom practices.

The data collected were coded and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 25. Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations, were used to summarise the data. Where appropriate, inferential statistical tests were employed to determine the relationship between the implementation of the new curriculum and the development of competences in pupils. Statistical decisions were made at a 0.05 level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$).

8. Analysis and interpretation of results

The study used a simple linear regression model to examine the extent to which the implementation of the new curriculum influences the development of competences among pupils. This section presents the statistical analysis and interpretation of the results. It begins by identifying the appropriate statistical technique for testing the research hypothesis, followed by the presentation of the results in tables. The results are then analysed and interpreted to determine whether the hypothesis is supported or rejected.

Verification of research hypothesis 1

The research hypothesis one is formulated as follows: The curriculum package has a significant effect on the development of competences in pupils. From this hypothesis we have the null and the alternative hypothesis.

Table 1: ANOVA

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	21.746	1	21.746	157.752	.044[b]
	Residual	.832	75	.003		
	Total	22.578	76			

a. Dependent Variable: DEVELOPMENT OF COMPETENCIES IN PUPILS

b. Predictors: (Constant), THE CURRICULUM PACKAGE

This table, which is that of ANOVA, shows the F of Fisher-snedecor. In this table, we observe F (76) = 157.752 with the significance p = 0.044. The ANOVA rule is that:

- If F read is greater than F Calculated, Ho is accepted while Ha is rejected;
- If F read is less than F Calculated, Ho is rejected while Ha is accepted.

Then, since F read (76) is less than F calculated (157.752), therefore Ho is invalidated then Ha is confirmed. This value is significant at p (0.044) <α (0.05), this result indicates that we have less than 5% chance of being wrong in asserting that the models help to predict the development of competences in pupils. We can therefore reject the null hypothesis and affirm that there is a significant link between the curriculum package and the development of competences in pupils.

Table 2: model summary

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.652[a]	.0412	.0412	.05411

a. Predictors: (Constant), THE CURRICULUM PACKAGE

This table above shows that the value of the linear correlation (R) which provides information on the strength of the relationship between DV (development of competences in pupils) and IV1 (the curriculum package) of the model is 0.652. The value of this correlation coefficient (R) shows that the correlation link between these two variables is positive, strong and significant because the value of (R) is close to 1.

We also realize that the coefficient of determination (R-square) is 0.0412 = 4.12%. This statistic shows that IV1: "the curriculum package" explains DV "development of competences in pupils" at 4.12% and the rest 95.88% is predicted / explained by factors outside of this model.

Table 3: coefficients

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.033	.019		1.695	.032
	THE CURRICULUM PACKAGE	.989	.007	.993	32.216	.044

a. Dependent Variable: DEVELOPMENT OF COMPETENCES IN PUPILS

The table above (of the coefficients) explains the variation in DV from the estimated equation of the Model; Y = [b0 + (b1) x]

Y = [0.033+ (0.989) IV1]

The development of competencies in pupils = 0.033 + 0.989 the curriculum package.

• Y = dependent variable.

• b0 = estimated variation on DV when IV1 is zero (0.033)

• b1 = variation on the DV which is associated with a variation on the predicator variable (IV1) (0.989)

• X = Independent variable (IV1).

This equation indicates that one unit of positive variability in IV1 also results in one unit of (positive) change in DV. The variation here is (0.989) and it results from a variation on IV1. In addition, this has a significance of 0.044 <0.05 with t (32.216) different from p (0.040).

Partial conclusion

In conclusion, Ho is rejected and Ha accepted according to the decision rule. We therefore conclude with a margin of error of 5% that RH1 is confirmed. In other words, the

Verification of research hypothesis 2

The research hypothesis two is formulated as follows: The teaching methods have a significant effect on the development of competences in pupils. From this hypothesis we have the null and the alternative hypothesis.

Table 4: ANOVA

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	21.951	1	21.951	98.542	.032[b]
	Residual	.627	75	.021		
	Total	22.578	76			

a. Dependent Variable: DEVELOPMENT OF COMPETENCIES IN PUPILS

b. Predictors: (Constant), THE TEACHING METHODS

This table, which is that of ANOVA, shows the F of Fisher-snedecor. In this table, we observe F (76) = 98.542 with the significance p = 0.032. The ANOVA rule is that:

- If F read is greater than F Calculated, Ho is accepted while Ha is rejected;

- If F read is less than F Calculated, Ho is rejected while Ha is accepted.

Then, since F read (76) is less than F calculated (98.542), therefore Ho is invalidated then Ha is confirmed. This value is significant at p (0.032) <α (0.05), this result indicates that we have less than 5% chance of being wrong in asserting that the models help to predict the development of competences in pupils. We can therefore reject the null hypothesis and affirm that there is a significant link between the teaching methods and the development of competences in pupils.

Table 5: model summary

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.325[a]	.0542	.0548	.04912

a. Predictors: (Constant), THE TEACHING METHODS

This table above shows that the value of the linear correlation (R) which provides information on the strength of the relationship between DV (development of competences in pupils) and IV2 (the teaching methods) of the model is 0.325. The value of this correlation coefficient (R) shows that the correlation link between these two variables is positive, weak and significant because the value of (R) is close to 0.

We also realize that the coefficient of determination (R-square) is 0.0542 = 5.42%. This statistic shows that IV2: "the teaching methods" explains DV "development of competences in pupils" at 5.42% and the rest 94.48% is predicted / explained by factors outside of this model.

Table 6: coefficients

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.258	.017		1.532	.041
	THE TEACHING METHODS	.642	.008	.856	37.145	.032

a. Dependent Variable: DEVELOPMENT OF COMPETENCES IN PUPILS

The above table (of the coefficients) explains the variation in DV from the estimated equation of the Model; Y = [b0 + (b1) x]

Y = [0.258+ (0.642) IV2]

The development of competencies in pupils = 0.258 + 0.642 the teaching methods.

• Y = dependent variable.

• b0 = estimated variation on DV when IV2 is zero (0.258)

• b1 = variation on the DV which is associated with a variation on the predicator variable (IV2) (0.642)

• X = Independent variable (IV2).

This equation indicates that one unit of positive variability in IV2 also results in one unit of (positive) change in DV. The variation here is (0.642) and it results from a variation on IV2. In addition, this has a significance of 0.032 <0.05 with t (37.145) different from p (0.032).

Partial conclusion

In conclusion, Ho is rejected and Ha accepted according to the decision rule. We therefore conclude with a margin of error of 5% that RH2 is confirmed. In other words, the teaching methods have a significant effect on the development of competences in pupils.

Verification of research hypothesis 3

The research hypothesis three is formulated as follows: The curriculum resources have a significant effect on the development of competences in pupils. From this hypothesis we have the null and the alternative hypothesis.

Table 7: ANOVA

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	21.601	1	21.601	102.854	.004[b]
	Residual	.977	75	.032		
	Total	22.578	76			

a. Dependent Variable: DEVELOPMENT OF COMPETENCIES IN PUPILS

b. Predictors: (Constant), THE CURRICULUM RESOURCES

This table, which is that of ANOVA, shows the F of Fisher-snedecor. In this table, we observe F (76) = 102.854 with the significance p = 0.004. The ANOVA rule is that:

- If F read is greater than F Calculated, Ho is accepted while Ha is rejected;
- If F read is less than F Calculated, Ho is rejected while Ha is accepted.

Then, since F read (76) is less than F calculated (102.854), therefore Ho is invalidated then Ha is confirmed. This value is significant at p (0.004) <α (0.05), this result indicates that we have less than 5% chance of being wrong in asserting that the models help to predict the development of competences in pupils. We can therefore reject the null hypothesis and affirm that there is a significant link between the curriculum resources and the development of competences in pupils.

Table 8: model summary

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.712[a]	.0714	.0715	.03211

a. Predictors: (Constant), THE CURRICULUM RESOURCES

This table above shows that the value of the linear correlation (R) which provides information on the strength of the relationship between DV (development of competences in pupils) and IV3 (the curriculum resources) of the model is 0.712. The value of this correlation coefficient (R) shows that the correlation link between these two variables is positive, strong and significant because the value of (R) is close to 1.

We also realize that the coefficient of determination (R-square) is 0.0714 = 7.14%. This statistic shows that IV3: "the curriculum resources" explains DV "development of competences in pupils" at 7.14% and the rest 92.86% is predicted / explained by factors outside of this model.

Table 9: coefficients

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.195	.015		1.857	.009
	THE CURRICULUM RESOURCES	.927	.006	.754	41.562	.004

a. Dependent Variable: DEVELOPMENT OF COMPETENCES IN PUPILS

The above table (of the coefficients) explains the variation in DV from the estimated equation of the Model; Y = [b0 + (b1) x]

Y = [0.195+ (0.927) IV3]

The development of competencies in pupils = 0.195 + 0.927 the curriculum resources.

• Y = dependent variable.

• b0 = estimated variation on DV when IV3 is zero (0.195)

• b1 = variation on the DV which is associated with a variation on the predicator variable (IV3) (0.927)

• X = Independent variable (IV3).

This equation indicates that one unit of positive variability in IV3 also results in one unit of (positive) change in DV. The variation here is (0.927) and it results from a variation on IV3. In addition, this has a significance of 0.004 <0.05 with t (41.562) different from p (0.004).

Partial conclusion

In conclusion, Ho is rejected and Ha accepted according to the decision rule. We therefore conclude with a margin of error of 5% that RH3 is confirmed. In other words, the curriculum resources have a significant effect on the development of competences in pupils.

9. Some challenges in the implementation of the new curriculum

Field observations and the findings of the study indicated that the majority of teachers believed that they had sufficient knowledge of Competence-Based Approaches (CBA). Most teachers rated their level of curriculum implementation as moderate. However, the majority were unable to demonstrate how to prepare a competence-based lesson plan or effectively deliver a lesson using the competence-based approach. The researcher also observed that many teachers continued to rely on traditional instructional approaches.

The data collected through the questionnaires indicate that the challenges affecting the implementation of the new curriculum in English-speaking primary schools in Diamaré Division can be grouped into several major areas. Three of the main challenges identified are discussed below.

9.1 Lack of in-service training on competence-based approaches

The findings confirmed that inadequate teacher training is one of the major challenges hindering the effective implementation of the new curriculum. The study showed that limited opportunities for in-service training on the curriculum constrain teachers' pedagogical knowledge and skills and their ability to apply the Competence-Based Approach (CBA) effectively during the teaching and learning process.

Some teachers reported that certain subjects were difficult to teach, making it challenging for them to prepare lessons and effectively deliver them. This suggests that teachers may not yet have received sufficient sensitisation and intensive training on the requirements of the new curriculum.

Many teachers appeared to lack the knowledge and practical skills required to implement the CBA effectively in schools. Some respondents explained that they occasionally attended pedagogical seminars that provided short training sessions on the use of the new curriculum. However, they noted that the duration of these training sessions was too short and that the content covered was insufficient to provide the knowledge and skills required for successful implementation.

The proportion of teachers who reported inadequate knowledge of various aspects of curriculum implementation is therefore a matter of concern. As a result, some teachers may be unable to implement the curriculum according to the CBA methods prescribed in it because they lack the pedagogical and technical skills required to address learners' diverse and complex learning needs. This situation may ultimately affect the quality of education by producing school leavers who do not possess the skills and competences required in further education, employment and everyday life.

9.2 Insufficient teaching and learning resources and facilities

The findings also revealed that primary schools face shortages of teaching and learning resources and facilities, including textbooks,

libraries, computer laboratories and adequate classrooms. The lack or insufficiency of these resources does not favour the effective implementation of the new curriculum.

The availability of appropriate teaching and learning resources and facilities is important because it can enable pupils to participate actively in the learning process. Observations conducted in some of the schools included in the study showed that the textbook-to-pupil ratio ranged from approximately 1:6 to 1:12 or even higher. The shortage of institutional resources, such as textbooks and reference books, therefore constitutes a significant challenge to curriculum implementation.

Of particular concern is the fact that some of the available textbooks do not adequately reflect the current curriculum and provide limited guidance on how teaching should be conducted according to CBA requirements. The situation is even more serious with regard to classrooms, library facilities and ICT infrastructure. The schools observed had overcrowded classrooms, while none of the schools included in the study had a library. Furthermore, approximately 98% of the schools reportedly had no computers.

Such shortages limit opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning skills, problem-solving abilities and curiosity, all of which are essential for the development of competences. The effective implementation of a competence-based curriculum therefore requires adequate teaching and learning resources, as well as an appropriate learning environment.

9.3 Large class sizes

Large class sizes were another major challenge identified by the majority of respondents. The study found that the number of pupils in classrooms exceeded 80 in all the schools included in the study, resulting in overcrowded learning environments. The researcher observed that the teacher–pupil ratio in some schools ranged from approximately 1:90 to 1:150 or even higher.

Under such conditions, teachers face considerable difficulties in implementing the CBA effectively. In some classrooms, the level of overcrowding was so high that teachers could hardly move around

or interact adequately with individual pupils. Teachers also reported difficulties in organising classroom discussions and group activities.

The situation becomes particularly challenging when teachers are expected to teach classes of more than 100 pupils from 7:30 a.m. and cover more than six different subjects in a single day. In some cases, pupils were observed sitting on the floor or close to the board because of the lack of adequate classroom space. Under such conditions, it is difficult for teachers to implement all the requirements of the new curriculum, which include teaching, assessing learners, identifying learning difficulties and providing appropriate remedial support.

Large class sizes therefore tend to limit teacher–pupil interaction and reduce opportunities for meaningful pupil–pupil interaction during classroom discussions and group activities. This is particularly problematic because the new curriculum is learner-centred and relies heavily on interactive teaching and learning methods. Effective implementation of the curriculum consequently requires reasonable class sizes that allow teachers to interact with learners, monitor their progress and provide appropriate support.

9.4 Learners' attitudes towards cooperation

The findings from the respondents indicate that some pupils demonstrate a low level of cooperation, which affects the effective implementation of the Competence-Based Approach (CBA). Some respondents reported that pupils were reluctant to participate when teachers attempted to involve them actively in the teaching and learning process. Such participation is necessary to encourage creativity, problem-solving skills and an inquisitive mindset.

Pupils were particularly less cooperative when given classroom activities that required them to solve problems, think critically or work independently. This may be because many of them are accustomed to a teacher-centred approach based largely on rote learning, memorisation and repetition. Consequently, they may find it difficult to adjust to a learner-centred approach that requires active participation and greater responsibility for their own learning.

This situation suggests that primary school pupils need to be progressively oriented towards learner-centred teaching and learning methods. Teachers and schools should therefore provide regular opportunities for pupils to participate in discussions, group activities, practical tasks, projects and problem-solving exercises.

9.5 Teachers' educational culture and background

Another challenge identified was the educational culture and professional background of teachers. Most teachers were trained using traditional, teacher-centred approaches, and some find it difficult to adapt to the new learner-centred and competence-based approach. One teacher explained: "I find it very difficult to apply this approach in teaching because I have no experience with it. I was teaching using the style of my teacher." According to the teacher, adapting to the new approach requires time, adequate training and a supportive working environment.

This finding suggests that teachers' previous educational experiences and professional backgrounds may influence their ability to adopt new teaching approaches. Teachers who were trained and have worked mainly within traditional teacher-centred systems may require continuous professional development and practical support to develop confidence in implementing the CBA.

There is therefore a need to strengthen teacher preparation and professional development at different levels of education. Teacher-training institutions should place greater emphasis on competence-based and learner-centred approaches so that future teachers become familiar with these methods before entering the profession. Existing teachers should also receive regular practical training and support to help them adapt to the requirements of the new curriculum.

9.6 Lack of school and home support

The findings further revealed that inadequate institutional and parental support is one of the major challenges affecting the effective implementation of the new curriculum. About 69% of the respondents reported that insufficient institutional support limited the effective implementation of practical subjects included in the curriculum.

Some teachers indicated that schools, in collaboration with Parent–Teacher Associations (PTAs), need to create a conducive and supportive teaching and learning environment for effective curriculum implementation. Some teachers who reported having a good understanding of the curriculum explained that school authorities and parents sometimes failed to support projects that they planned to carry out with pupils because such activities required financial and material resources.

The problem is particularly serious in overcrowded schools. In some cases, PTAs have not provided sufficient support for the acquisition of resources or the improvement of school infrastructure. Such support could include constructing additional classrooms to reduce overcrowding and recruiting additional teachers where necessary.

The findings therefore suggest that effective implementation of the new curriculum requires cooperation among teachers, school administrators, parents and PTAs. The school and the home should work together to provide the material, financial and social support necessary for learners to participate effectively in practical activities and projects. Without such collaboration, the implementation of the curriculum may continue to face significant challenges.

10. Conclusion

The Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) represents a significant shift from traditional approaches to teaching and learning towards a learner-centred approach that emphasises the development and mobilisation of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values in authentic and real-life situations. Its implementation in Cameroon is therefore intended not merely to enable pupils to acquire academic knowledge, but also to equip them with the competences required to solve problems, adapt to changing circumstances and effectively participate in society.

This study examined the implementation of the new curriculum in Cameroon, with particular emphasis on the development of competences in pupils. The findings provide evidence that the implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum has a significant effect on the development of competences among

pupils. All the research hypotheses were confirmed, with the observed significance values indicating statistically significant relationships between the different dimensions of curriculum implementation and competence development. The findings consequently support the general research hypothesis that effective implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum contributes significantly to the development of competences in pupils.

Despite this positive relationship, the study also revealed important challenges that may limit the effective attainment of the objectives of the new curriculum. The implementation process has not always been systematic and adequately planned. In addition, many teachers have received insufficient training on the content, principles and pedagogical approaches associated with competency-based teaching. This situation may affect teachers' ability to effectively translate curriculum expectations into classroom practices. The inadequate availability of teachers' guides, instructional materials and other pedagogical resources further constitutes a major constraint to effective implementation.

The study also established that the involvement of parents and other education stakeholders in the curriculum reform process remains inadequate. Since competency development extends beyond classroom instruction and requires learners to apply knowledge in meaningful contexts, stronger collaboration among schools, families, communities and other stakeholders is essential. Limited stakeholder participation may therefore weaken the sustainability and effectiveness of the curriculum reform.

The findings have important implications for educational policy and practice in Cameroon. First, there is a need for sustained and systematic professional development of teachers through regular seminars, workshops, refresher courses and other forms of in-service training. Such training should go beyond theoretical explanations of the competency-based approach and provide teachers with practical skills in lesson planning, learner-centred teaching, authentic assessment, problem-solving activities and the integration of real-life situations into classroom learning. Second, the provision of adequate teachers' guides, textbooks, instructional materials and other teaching-learning resources should be given greater priority.

Furthermore, curriculum implementation should be continuously monitored and evaluated to identify gaps and provide timely support to teachers and schools. Parents, school administrators, communities and other relevant stakeholders should also be actively involved in the implementation process. Their participation can contribute to creating learning environments in which pupils have opportunities to practise and demonstrate the competences acquired at school.

In conclusion, the introduction of the Competency-Based Curriculum provides Cameroon with an important opportunity to transform primary education from an emphasis on the transmission of knowledge towards the development and practical application of competences. However, the existence of a curriculum framework alone cannot guarantee the achievement of this objective. Its success depends largely on the quality of implementation, teacher preparedness, availability of resources, effective monitoring and evaluation, and the active participation of education stakeholders. Unless these challenges are addressed urgently and systematically, the expected outcomes of the curriculum reform may remain difficult to achieve. Strengthening teacher capacity and providing the necessary pedagogical and institutional support should therefore remain central priorities if the Competency-Based Curriculum is to produce pupils who are genuinely capable of applying their knowledge and skills effectively in real-life situations.

11. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are addressed to the different stakeholders involved in the implementation of the curriculum and the development of competences among learners.

I. To the Ministry of Basic Education (MINEDUB)

The study found that teachers' understanding of the new curriculum was moderate and that many teachers faced significant difficulties in implementing it effectively. As the main authority responsible for basic education in the country, the Ministry of Basic Education should:

- Strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of curriculum implementation in schools.
- Organise regular nationwide in-service training and refresher courses on competence-based education and effective implementation strategies.
- Ensure the timely provision of curriculum documents, teachers' guides, textbooks and other teaching and learning materials.
- Allocate adequate funding to support competence-based teaching, learning and assessment.
- Review the curriculum regularly to address implementation challenges identified by teachers and pedagogic supervisors, and ensure alignment among learning outcomes, teaching activities and assessment methods for effective competence development.
- Produce practical teaching guides containing examples of competence-based learning activities, lesson plans and assessment tasks.
- Construct additional classrooms and recruit more teachers to reduce overcrowding and bring class sizes closer to recommended standards. This would enable teachers to manage their classes more effectively, provide appropriate support to learners with learning difficulties and apply competence-based teaching methods effectively.

II. To regional and local councils

Regional and local councils also have an important role to play in supporting the implementation of the new curriculum. They should:

- Become actively involved in curriculum implementation by providing the material resources required for practical activities in schools.
- Fulfil their responsibilities in the provision of educational infrastructure, including the construction of classrooms and, where applicable, the recruitment of teachers, rather than leaving these responsibilities primarily to Parent–Teacher Associations (PTAs).

- Strengthen collaboration with schools and other educational stakeholders to improve the learning environment and support the development of competences among pupils.

Article 55(2) of Law No. 96-06 of 18 January 1996 provides that regional and local councils have a responsibility to promote education. This legal provision highlights the need for these councils to play a more active role in supporting schools and ensuring that learners have appropriate conditions for effective teaching and learning.

III. To teacher training schools

Teacher training schools play an important role in preparing teachers to contribute to the achievement of the country's educational goals. Since these institutions provide initial teacher training, they should:

- Strengthen pre-service teacher education by placing greater emphasis on competence-based pedagogy and assessment.
- Provide more school-based practicum opportunities focused on learner-centred teaching and competence development.
- Work closely with MINEDUB to support continuous professional development and in-service training for practising teachers.
- Equip student teachers with practical skills for preparing competence-based lesson plans, using learner-centred methods and assessing learners' competences.

IV. To teachers

Teachers are the main actors responsible for implementing the curriculum in the classroom and play a central role in translating educational policies into practice. Based on the findings of this study, teachers should:

- Adopt learner-centred, activity-based and problem-solving approaches rather than relying mainly on lectures and teacher demonstrations.

- Use continuous and authentic assessment techniques to evaluate learners' knowledge, skills and competences.
- Encourage collaborative learning, project work, practical activities and critical thinking.
- Participate actively in professional development programmes, in-service training and pedagogical workshops.
- Reflect regularly on their teaching practices and adapt their strategies to meet the diverse needs of learners.
- Make effective use of available teaching and learning resources to support the development of competences.
- Encourage pupils to take greater responsibility for their learning and actively participate in classroom activities.

V. To school administrators

As the direct supervisors of teachers at school level, school administrators have an important role in ensuring the effective implementation of the curriculum. They should:

- Conduct regular classroom observations and provide constructive feedback to teachers.
- Organise school-based pedagogical meetings where teachers can share experiences, challenges and good practices.
- Ensure the availability, proper management and effective use of teaching and learning materials.
- Create a supportive school environment that encourages innovation, collaboration and learner-centred teaching.
- Provide teachers with opportunities to discuss challenges encountered in implementing the competence-based approach and work together to find appropriate solutions.
- Strengthen collaboration with parents, PTAs and other stakeholders to mobilise resources and support activities aimed at developing learners' competences.

VI. To pedagogic inspectors and supervisors

As specialists in pedagogical practices, pedagogic inspectors and supervisors have an important role to play in supporting teachers and ensuring the effective implementation of the curriculum. They should:

- Increase the frequency of school visits and place greater emphasis on mentoring and professional support rather than focusing solely on inspection.
- Demonstrate effective competence-based teaching methods during classroom supervision and provide practical guidance to teachers.
- Support teachers in developing competence-based lesson plans and appropriate assessment tools.
- Provide constructive feedback and practical recommendations to help teachers improve their classroom practices.
- Organise regular pedagogical workshops and professional development sessions to address challenges identified during school visits.

VII. To parents

Parents have an important influence on the effective implementation of the curriculum because children come from the home and spend a significant amount of time with their families outside school. Parents should therefore:

- Support their children's learning by monitoring homework and encouraging practical learning activities at home.
- Participate actively in school activities and maintain regular communication with teachers and school administrators.
- Provide a home environment that encourages curiosity, creativity, problem-solving and independent learning.
- Support school projects and practical activities, where possible, by providing the necessary materials and encouragement.
- Encourage children to apply the knowledge and skills acquired at school to everyday situations at home and in their communities.

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